



## MONTANA STATE HOSPITAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

### ESCORTING PATIENTS OFF GROUNDS

**Effective Date:** March 14, 2007

**Policy #:** TX-27

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- I. PURPOSE:** To provide for safety and security when escorting patients off grounds
- II. POLICY:** All MSH patients will be escorted and supervised closely when off grounds for appointments, community outings, or other events.
  - A. FORENSIC PATIENTS:** A minimum ratio of one (1) staff member for up to three (3) patients who are on forensic commitments will be maintained. An increased level of staffing will be provided whenever a need is indicated
  - B. CIVIL PATIENTS:** The staffing ratio will be determined by the Program Manager or designee after consideration of the individuals who will be going on the trip, the destination, and benefits and risks. For example, an individual visiting a community mental health program to prepare for discharge does not require the same level of supervision as an individual who may be on suicide precautions who has an appointment with a medical professional in the community.

Patients should be evaluated by the treatment team for therapeutic appropriateness for going to the activity. Risk of elopement (unauthorized leave should be evaluated). Staff must always directly accompany each patient during the outing. In the event that a patient needs to use a restroom, or try on clothes, or requires privacy for a similar activity, staff may wait outside this area. Staff must be alert and attentive at all times.

This policy applies to all units of Montana State Hospital including the Hospital, the Residential Care Unit, and the Transitional Care Units (group homes).

The ratios included in this policy do not apply to supervised walks to the Warm Springs Store or walks on the Warm Springs Wildlife Management Area surrounding the Hospital.

### **III. DEFINITIONS:**

Forensic Patients - Those admitted to Montana State Hospital under criminal procedures Title 46, Section 14 of the Montana Code or people transferred from Montana Department of Corrections facilities who are on civil commitments.

Civil Patients – Those admitted to Montana State Hospital under Title 53, Section 21 of the Montana Code including those on voluntary admission status.

#### IV. RESPONSIBILITIES:

Treating Prescriber – to give physician's order authorizing off grounds trips, activities, or appointments.

Program Manager – to review the arrangements for off-grounds trips and ensure that adequate supervision of each patient has been provided for.

Registered Nurse – To assign staff and to review the arrangements for off-grounds trips and ensure that adequate supervision of each patient has been provided for.

Psychiatric Technicians – To follow procedures intended to protect the patient and the public and to notify appropriate parties including law enforcement agencies and the Hospital if assistance is needed.

Patient Transport Driver (teamster) – to respond to calls (cell phone contact) from the Hospital or escorting staff and to provide assistance as needed or directed.

#### V. PROCEDURE:

A. Each patient will be evaluated by the Treating Prescriber as to the therapeutic appropriateness of each activity. At the time of the activity, the patient should be re-evaluated by the Program Manager or Registered Nurse. This is intended to be an informal assessment, and, if no problems are noted, documentation will not normally be entered into the clinical record. Items to be considered are:

1. Risk to others including the public at large
2. Risk for self-harm
3. Mental status
4. Necessity or importance of the appointment or activity
5. Involvement in treatment
6. Cooperation with staff, peers, and hospital/unit rules
7. Physical condition
8. Criminal charges (pending or adjudicated)
9. Victim impact (if applicable)
10. Other indicators such as high anxiety, recent disappointment, dishonesty about intent, etc.

B. Trips should be taken to the intended destination and when the event is completed, should return directly to the Hospital. Stops can occur as needed for meals, restroom use, etc. Stops may also occur for other hospital business.

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- VI. REFERENCES:** Title 46, Section 14 of the Montana Code Annotated, Title 53, Section 21 of the Montana Code Annotated
- VII. COLLABORATED WITH:** Program Managers, Medical Director, Director of Nursing, Director of Business and Support Services and the Hospital Administrator
- VIII. RESCISSIONS:** None, new policy
- IX. DISTRIBUTION:** All hospital policy manuals
- X. REVIEW AND REISSUE DATE:** March 2010
- XI. FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY:** Program Managers
- XII. ATTACHMENTS:** None

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Thomas Gray, M.D. Date  
Medical Director